

# Leader of Downstate Organized Crime Enterprise Convicted Of Two Murders

*Also, Wilmington man faces life in prison after murder conviction; Former nonprofit executive sentenced to prison for stealing donations*

Steven Kellam, the leader of a violent crime network that operated in Sussex and Kent counties, was convicted on several felony charges including 2 counts of Murder First Degree, and will spend the rest of his life in prison when sentenced later this year. A Superior Court jury convicted Kellam, 37, of Seaford, on charges of 2 counts of Murder First Degree, 1 count of Organized Crime and Racketeering, 27 counts of Possession of a Firearm During the Commission of a Felony, 3 counts of Conspiracy Second Degree, 1 count of Conspiracy First Degree, 3 counts of Home Invasion, 2 counts of Robbery First Degree, 2 counts of Assault Second Degree, 1 count of Assault Third Degree, 2 counts of Attempted Robbery First Degree, and 1 count of Wearing a Disguise During the Commission of a Felony. In addition to several other crimes, Kellam along with Richard Robinson, Rhamir Waples, Shamir Stratton and Carlton Gibbs were found to be involved in a January 2014 home invasion robbery on Harmon's Hill Road in Millsboro, during which Cletis Nelson and William Hopkins were shot and killed. The criminal enterprise was brought down in the summer of 2015 by a joint investigation by the Delaware State Police and the Delaware Department of Justice, called Operation "In the House." Kellam's case was the last to be resolved of those involved in the January 2014 incident. In addition to Kellam's conviction:

- Richard Robinson pled guilty in December 2016 to Murder Second Degree, Organized Crime and Racketeering, 2

counts of Possession of a Firearm During the Commission of a Felony, 1 count of Conspiracy First Degree, and 1 count of Burglary First Degree.

- Rhamir Waples was convicted by a jury in March 2017 of 2 counts of Murder First Degree, 15 counts of Possession of a Firearm During the Commission of a Felony, 1 count of Home Invasion, 2 counts of Robbery First Degree, and 1 count of Conspiracy Second Degree.
- Shamir Stratton pled guilty in December 2016 to Home Invasion, Possession of a Firearm During the Commission of a Felony, Robbery First Degree, and Conspiracy Second Degree.
- Carlton Gibbs pled guilty in May 2017 to Robbery Second Degree.

Deputy Attorneys General Chris Hutchison and Martin Cosgrove prosecuted the case. The original release with details on Operation “In The House” can be found [here](#). Department of Justice has worked with Delaware State Police and other agencies over the past few years in bringing down similar criminal enterprises as part of other joint investigations including: “Operation Golden Horseshoe” in August 2017 related to a drug trafficking operation in Sussex County; Operation Duck Hunt” in May 2016 involving heroin trafficking and money laundering in Kent and Sussex counties; and “Operation Son Sun” which resulted in guilty adjudications for all 46 defendants tied to Delaware’s largest heroin trafficking organization. DOJ prosecutors have also successfully prosecuted multiple members of the Touch Money Gang (TMG), Only My Brothers (OMB) and the Shoot to Kill (STK) criminal gangs.

A 40-year-old Wilmington man will spend the rest of his life in prison for the 2015 fatal shooting of another man in the city. A Superior Court jury convicted Damian Thomas of Murder First Degree, Possession of a Firearm During the Commission of a Felony, Possession of a Firearm by a Person Prohibited, and

Carrying a Concealed Deadly Weapon. In April 2015, 38-year-old Deshannon Reid was on the phone while sitting with his mother on his porch in the unit block of West 27th Street when Thomas came up and tried to talk to him. The two men argued when Reid told Thomas to leave him alone, prompting Thomas get a gun from a nearby apartment, return, and use it shoot Reid. Thomas fled after the shooting and was arrested in Cherry Hill, New Jersey in July 2016. A judge will sentence Thomas to life in prison in November. Deputy Attorneys General Annemarie Puit and Eric Zubrow prosecuted the case, with assistance from social worker Donna Lindsey, investigator John Ciritella, paralegals Stacey Coupe and Jamie Prater, and administrative specialist Evelyn Davis.

Eric Harris, the former executive director of Sojourners' Place in Wilmington, will spend 7 years in prison for stealing from the non-profit organization. The 51-year-old Harris pled guilty in Superior Court in April 2017 to Theft over \$100,000, Act of Intimidation, and Forgery Second Degree. Starting in fall 2013, Harris began stealing donation checks sent to Sojourners Place totaling \$189,947, depositing them into a bank account he had set up in the charity's name without its authorization. Harris then withdrew those funds as cash or charged the account for personal expenses. A Superior Court judge sentenced Harris to a total of 35 years in prison, of which he will serve 7 years, followed by 6 months of either home confinement or work release, then 1 year of probation. Harris was ordered to have no contact with Sojourners' Place or its employees, and not to handle any funds for any future employer. Harris must also pay restitution to Sojourners' Place and its insurance carrier. During the sentencing hearing, the judge expressed the magnitude of the impact that this economic crime had on the community, and the good, charitable work done by Sojourners' Place. Deputy Attorneys General Stephen McDonald and Thomas Brown of the DOJ Consumer Protection Unit prosecuted the case. Detective Michael Hayman of the Wilmington Police led the criminal investigation.

Deputy Attorney General Jenna Milecki secured a prison sentence for a 33-year-old Middletown man who sexually abused a child. Daniel Alvarez pled guilty in July to one count of Rape Third Degree and one count of Attempted Unlawful Sexual Contact First Degree in connection with his repeated abuse of a child throughout 2014. A Superior Court judge sentenced Alvarez to 11 years in prison, followed by 6 months of either home confinement or work release, then 4 years of probation. Alvarez must also register as a Tier 3 sex offender. DOJ social worker Claudia Melton assisted with the case.

A 34-year-old New Castle man will face at least 10 years in prison for raping a child. Gemiyale Adkins pled guilty to one count of Rape Second Degree and one count of Rape Fourth Degree in Superior Court. During the late summer of 2016, Adkins sexually assaulted a young child. When sentenced by a Superior Court judge in November, Adkins faces a minimum mandatory prison sentence of 10 years, and will be required to register as a Tier 3 sex offender. Deputy Attorney General Jenna Milecki prosecuted the case with assistance from social worker Claudia Melton.